

Syed Abul Hasan Ali Nadwi

The Role and Responsibilities of
MUSLIMS in the **WEST**



Translated by
Abdur Raheem Kidwai

The Islamic Foundation

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FOREWORD

Mawlana Abul Hasan Ali Nadwi, one of the most eminent Muslim scholars of the Indo-Pak subcontinent was to be one of the main speakers at the International Conference on 'Islam in Europe' organized by the Islamic Foundation on 5th September 1992. However, because of pressing engagements at home, the Mawlana could not grace the occasion. He, however, promised to visit the Foundation at a later date. He was able to visit us on 18th September 1992 and, as in the previous year, we once again had the opportunity to welcome him and benefit from his immense knowledge and practical experience of *da'wah*, education and *tarbiyyah*. Despite his frail health and the heavy demands on his time, he spent the whole day in the Foundation and drawing upon a pithy Qur'ānic verse (*al-Anfāl* 8: 73) delivered a thought-provoking lecture on the role and responsibilities of Muslims in the West. For its elucidation of the Qur'ānic message and sound practical advice the lecture was greatly appreciated.

Mawlana Nadwi (b. 1914) is undoubtedly one of the greatest Muslim thinkers of modern times whose services to Islam are perhaps more known and appreciated in the Arabic-speaking world than in the Indo-Pak subcontinent. This is mainly because he selected Arabic more than Urdu, his vernacular, as the main vehicle for the dissemination of his thought, writing and lectures. Mawlana Nadwi belongs to the illustrious family of Sayyid Aḥmad Shahīd (1786–1831) which produced a number of renowned scholars and *mujāhidīn* in the Indo-Pak subcontinent. His father, Mawlana Hakim Sayyid Abdul Hai was one of such scholars who produced, among other writings, an eight-volume encyclopaedic biographical work entitled *Nuzhat al-Khawāṭir*, containing biographical notices of some 5,000 scholars, theologians and jurists of India. Mawlana Nadwi

received his early education at the Nadwatul 'Ulama' and began his academic career from the same institution as teacher of Arabic literature and Qur'ānic exegesis. Apart from being a gifted orator, Mawlana Nadwi is a prolific writer. He has produced over fifty books and monographs and published innumerable articles in learned journals and periodicals on varied subjects ranging from *Sīrah*, biographies of *Ṣaḥābah*, history, Arabic literature to books for children and young people. His masterly analysis of the *Tahrik-e-Mujāhidīn* led by Sayyid Aḥmad Shahīd and his learned associates left an indelible mark not only on Indian historiography but Muslim history in general. His multi-voluminous exposition of the phenomenon of Islamic revival in different periods of Islamic history under the title of *Da'wat wa-'Azīmat*, translated into English as 'Saviours of Islamic Spirit', marks an important addition to the literature on the subject. Similarly his work on the life of the Prophet Muḥammad (Allah's peace and blessings be upon him) is another significant contribution to the field of *Sīrah* literature.

For over two decades he has been the rector of one of the distinguished educational institutions in India known as Darul-'Ulum, Nadwatul 'Ulama'. He is also president of the Academy of Islamic Research and Publications, Lucknow. The Nadwah was established almost a century ago, in 1894, as an institute of education, research and learning, in the formation and development of which, among others, the celebrated scholar and biographer of the Prophet, 'Allāmah Shiblī Nu'mānī (1857–1914), played a leading role. Like Deoband and other institutions in India, *Nadwah* has produced a number of reputed '*ulamā*' who played and continue to play a significant role in the advancement of Islamic knowledge in India and beyond. Besides being a founder member of the Rābitah al-'Ālam al-Islāmī, based in Makkah al-Mukarramah, Mawlana Nadwi is member and patron of a number of learned associations and bodies. Presently he is Chairman, Board of Trustees, of the Oxford Centre for Islamic Studies, Chairman, Managing Committee, Darul Musannifin, Azamgarh (India), member, Academy of Letters, Damascus and Higher Council of

the Islamic University, Madinah al-Munawwarah, member of the Executive Committee of the Federation of Islamic Universities, Rabat and of the Academy of Arabic Language, Oman. Mawlana Nadwi has also been a visiting professor at the Universities of Damascus and Madinah and addressed numerous conferences and seminars in Europe, America and the Arab world. His publications have been translated into a number of Islamic and European languages and are used as text and reference works in many of the universities and institutions of learning all over the world. In recognition of his outstanding services to Islam, Mawlana Nadwi became the recipient of the prestigious King Faisal Award in 1980.

The Mawlana's lecture addressed a highly pertinent issue of the day – role and responsibilities of Muslims in the West. Though this phenomenon of the presence of millions of Muslims in a non-Muslim land is new, the eternal guidance of the Qur'ān and *Hadīth* steers and guides the Muslim *ummah*. Mawlana Nadwi's speech comprehensively covers the aspect of the divine guidance on this issue. And this is what makes his lecture stand out from and above others on this topic. This consideration has impelled us to produce the English translation of this brief yet highly valuable lecture for the benefit of a larger number of people. I am much obliged to the Mawlana for granting us permission to produce its English translation. I am thankful to Mawlana Syed Muhammad Rabey Nadwi for accompanying the Mawlana during his visit to the Foundation and for providing us with a final copy of the Mawlana's speech for translation. I must thank my colleague Dr. Abdur Raheem Kidwai, for effectively translating the lecture from Urdu into English. My thanks also go to Br. Sarwar Rija who provided us with the English translation of some Persian couplets of Iqbal's poetry used in the lecture.

May Allah accept our humble efforts and grant us the ability and strength to work for the cause of Islam in the West.

Ramadan 1413
March 1993

Muhammad Manazir Ahsan
Director General
Islamic Foundation, Leicester

PREFACE

In the Name of Allah, the Beneficent, the Merciful

This booklet comprises the speech which Mawlana Syed Abul Hasan Ali Hasni Nadwi delivered at the Islamic Foundation, Leicester (U.K.) on 18th September, 1992 in a reception organized in his honour. The programme was attended by a large number of scholars, *Ulamā'* and students. The Mawlana had been invited earlier by the Islamic Foundation to grace its conference 'Islam in Europe' on 5th September, 1992. However, owing to his preoccupations in India, the Mawlana was unable to attend. This reception, therefore, was held during his visit to the U.K. at a later date.

The Islamic Foundation was established two decades ago by a number of sincere, devout Muslims in order to present the message of Islam in both the U.K. and Europe. Foremost among them was the leading thinker and *Da'wah* activist, Professor Khurshid Ahmad, a member of the Pakistan Senate. To this day, he is Chairman of the Islamic Foundation, with Dr. Muhammad Manazir Ahsan as its Director General. This institution has now grown into a prestigious centre of Islamic learning and scholarship. It has published more than one hundred and fifty immensely useful and highly acclaimed books and carried out substantial research and academic work in the field of *Da'wah* and other disciplines of Islamic studies.

Mawlana Nadwi visits the U.K. almost every year to preside over the annual meeting of the Oxford Centre for Islamic Studies of which the Mawlana is the founder chairman. The Oxford Centre has close links with the University of Oxford. On the Advisory Board of this Centre are many leading figures of

the world of Islam. A number of institutions have been engaged in spreading the *Da'wah* of Islam in the U.K. The Mawlana has tremendous regard for all these institutions and looks forward to their success.

As in the previous year, the Mawlana visited the Islamic Foundation in Leicester after his meetings at the Oxford Centre. On that earlier occasion, he delivered a thought-provoking speech which has already been published in Urdu and English, *Da'wah in the West: The Qur'ānic Paradigm* by Syed Abul Hasan Ali Nadwi, tr. Abdur Raheem Kidwai (Leicester, Islamic Foundation, 1992). The Mawlana addressed the gathering at the Islamic Foundation this year as well. The Mawlana's speech is based on the Qur'ānic directive of which the immediate addressees were a handful of Madinan Muslims. The Qur'ān asked them: 'If you do not do this [spread the message of Islam] there will be persecution and great corruption in the land' (*al-Anfāl* 8: 73). By applying this Qur'ānic directive to those presently engaged in the cause of Islam in the U.K., the Mawlana elucidated implications of this Qur'ānic directive for their benefit. Focusing on this Qur'ānic verse, he outlined the role and responsibility of those devoted to the cause of spreading Islam in Europe. In addition, the Mawlana brought home the significance of their task and advised them to apply themselves, heart and soul, to this noble task.

The Mawlana went on to visit London and addressed another gathering at the Islamic Centre there. Since both these speeches are thematically interrelated, they have been put together here. May Allah make this publication useful for everyone (Ameen).

28 Rabī' al-Thānī 1413 A.H. **Syed Muhammad Rabey**
26 October 1992 C.E. **Hasni Nadwi**

Secretary,
Academy of Islamic Research
and Publications,
Nadwatul Ulama,
Lucknow (U.P.), India

THE ROLE OF THE MUSLIM UMMAH

Praise be to Allah and blessings and peace be upon
the Messenger of Allah and his offspring.

Dear Brothers in Islam!

I am an ordinary student of the Holy Qur'ān. It is common knowledge that Muslims read the Qur'ān every day and they try to read it as much as possible. Generally speaking, when one comes across something amazing which perplexes one, this effect gradually disappears. One does not eternally remain in a state of perplexity. However, let me relate my own experience. This, incidentally, forms the main point of my speech. To revert to my experience, whenever I read this verse of the Holy Qur'ān: 'If you do not do this [i.e. spread the message of Islam], there will be persecution and great corruption in the land' (*al-Anfāl* 8: 73), I am reminded that Allah addresses the Muslims in it, both *Muhājirūn* and *Anṣār*. The number of *Muhājirūn* who migrated from Makka to Madina were only a few hundred. For migration is not an easy job. It involves abandoning one's hearth and home, separation from kith and kin and forfeiting those privileges which one inherits locally. So the number of *Muhājirūn* was quite insignificant. In addition, the inhabitants of Madina had not embraced Islam in large numbers by this time. As is evident from *Ḥadīth*, the Prophet thrice ordered a census of Muslims. In the first census, their number stood at 500, in the second between 600 and 700 and in the third at 1,500. The Muslims considered even this figure of 1,500 quite high. They thanked Allah and were gratified to know that their number had reached such proportions. They

now felt somewhat secure and assured. For there was a time, not in the distant past, when they dare not perform prayers simply for fear of being attacked. They were subject to constant persecution at the hands of their enemies.¹

So, it was only a handful of Muslims who entered the fold of Islam at that time. Yet the responsibility entrusted to them was such that they were to carry out the spread of their message of guidance to the whole mass of humanity around them. Obviously the great majority of people in the world then had not even heard of Islam, let alone accepted this new faith. The world was then dominated by two empires with their distinct cultures, ways of life, ideals and values. These empires exercised absolute cultural hegemony over the rest of the world. They stood out as models for other nations. Take, for example, the general currency enjoyed by Roman law all over the world. Likewise, the Persian civilization had made its way even into India and other far-off lands.

Dear Brothers!

Whenever I read the verse I have just quoted, I am struck with wonder and amazement. It is simply beyond me to appreciate that this directive was given to a handful of people at a time when they were so few in number and so confined to a particular place. The last census which put the figure of Muslims at 1,500 was conducted, according to some scholars of *Ḥadīth* and researchers, on the eve of the Battle of Uḥud which took place in 3 H. Some scholars, however, hold that the census was taken at the time of the Battle of the Ditch (which is known also as the Battle of Confederates) in 5 H. Anyway, the period during which the census was conducted stretches at most to five years. What is really significant, however, is that these 1,500–2,000 Muslims are asked to unite and make a new unit based on faith, the Qur'ān, sound beliefs and under the supervision and guidance of the Prophet Muḥammad (peace be upon him).

They were asked to constitute this unit so as to disseminate the message of Islam and to liberate mankind from *Jahiliyyah* (a

lifestyle characterized by unbridled freedom and self-gratification) and to invite them to Islam (worshipping God and total surrender to Him). They are told that if they do not do so, it will engender great mischief and corruption in the world.

This makes me ponder over the relationship between the addressees of this directive and the magnitude of the task laid upon them. However, as the adage goes in both the Arabic and Persian languages, something that may be small quantitatively may be invaluable qualitatively. In other words, quality compensates for quantity. A few people can achieve a lot. Although this directive was made to a small band of people, they were quite worthy in terms of their quality. The decisive factor is, in fact, quality and not mere quantity. Little wonder, then, that this small band of people which excelled in quality proved its mettle by bringing about an epoch-making revolution. It brought an end to the Persian empire. Not only was the empire subjugated, Islam struck a death-blow to its ideals and values. For it is the way of life, thought-patterns and ideals that hold their sway over life. The very part of the word – Persia – which was considered the ideal for culture and civilization till the last days of the Caliphate of ‘Umar (may Allah be pleased with him), or the last phase of the Rightly-Guided Caliphate, had lost its prestigious position. The norms of this ideal were under constant change. Islam brought about a total transformation in people’s ideals, norms and thought-patterns. It marked freedom from mental and ideological subjugation to the two great empires of the day – the Persian and the Roman. The ideals of these cultures were no longer considered as the yardstick to measure one’s position. Rather, obedience to Allah and emulation of the Prophet Muḥammad’s (peace be upon him) *Sunnah*, following in the footsteps of the Prophet’s Companions (may Allah be pleased with them) in all departments of life – be it culture, one’s social life, customs and rituals, dress and all outward forms – were taken as the standard. This change affected everyone, rich and poor alike, the powerful and the ordinary, as is borne out by history.

It is common knowledge that lifestyles change and so do

cultural forms. However, standards of honour and dishonour, knowledge and ignorance, change very slowly and with much difficulty. It often takes centuries to effect such a change. Reading the history of human civilization, it is readily observable that certain standards affecting thought-patterns held their sway for centuries. One may readily change one's actions. However, in the wake of the new faith – Islam – both the worldview and people's thought-patterns were changed as well. A worldview is of immense significance in that it rules the way of life. We witness that in many Islamic countries the standards set by Western power and culture have still not changed. Their standards of honour, nobility, prosperity, poverty, ignorance, knowledge, progress and backwardness are still the same ones implanted by their colonial masters.

Seen against this backdrop it should be recalled that only a handful of Muslims who were constantly subjected to persecution were called upon to bring about a revolution throughout the world. They were entrusted with the onerous responsibility of following and leading others to a path characterized by Godliness, God-consciousness, love for fellow human beings, sacrifice and divine guidance. It is for us to note what degree of success this small band of Muslims achieved in discharging this responsibility. Though they were few in number, by dint of their intrinsic qualities and virtues, they achieved a great success. For a better appreciation of this success one may read books written after the 6th century A.D. in various languages, especially in English.²

Dear Brothers!

I must congratulate you on choosing such a suitable place for establishing the Islamic Foundation. You have been carrying out this valuable work in the very heart of Western civilization. If a movement is initiated from here or any major Western country or a major centre of Western civilization, it will be a force to be reckoned with in terms of its appeal and depth. I very much pray that those living in these Western countries may

realize a quest for the truth and feel the vacuum that mars their life. That they ask for breaking away from this life of darkness, of self-gratification, and of narrow vision. It is worth recalling here that the Qur'ān often uses the plural form for darkness, i.e. *ẓulumāt* and the singular form for light, i.e. *al-Nūr*. For example, take this recurring Qur'ānic statement: 'Allah brings them out of every darkness into light' (*al-Baqarah* 2: 257). We thus learn that there are many varieties of darkness, whereas there is only one light. I am sure Westerners will soon realize that they can derive this light only from Islam.

However, this can be achieved only when the lives and conduct of Muslims are marked by excellence. I recently related an episode at the Oxford Central Mosque. Let me repeat it here for it gives me immense pleasure every time I recount it. When Sayyid Aḥmad Shahīd (1786–1831) won over Peshawar (presently in Pakistan) and his army were encamped there, a local inhabitant took one of his companions aside and said to him: 'I want to ask you something. Do tell me correctly and frankly.' To this Sayyid Aḥmad Shahīd's companion agreed. He said: 'Are you and your fellow army men shortsighted? Can't you look at things at a distance?' He replied: 'No, it is not so. We can see things at a distance. You can test me. I will tell you what is situated at a distance.' He, however, still persisted and said: 'No! There is definitely something wrong, I believe you have this disability by birth.' The companion asked: 'Tell me, why are you asking it?' The local inhabitant said: 'I have been watching your army encamped here for several weeks. Some of you have been away from your homes for months, and others for years. Some of you are married while others are bachelors. However, we have not seen you looking at any local women. In view of this observation, the only reason we can think of is that you are shortsighted. For there is plenty of beauty and youth around you. However, we have not seen you ogling local women.' The companion replied: 'Praise be to Allah, there is no fault in our sight. However, we are led by this Qur'ānic directive: "Say to the believing men that they should lower their gaze and guard their modesty" (*al-Nūr* 24: 30). Moreover,

our leader has instructed us to behave in this manner, a point which is set forth in the following Qur'ānic verse: "O Believers! If you fear Allah, He will grant you a criterion (to judge between right and wrong)" (al-Anfāl 8: 29).

Dear Brothers in Islam!

While residing here if you set a new model, a new pattern and a unique lifestyle, reflecting total dissociation from the Western lifestyle, self-gratification, Mammon-worship and unbridled freedom, Westerners will have the curiosity to study Islam. They will visit you and ask for books to know the source of your uniqueness. They will be eager to find out what has transformed you and endowed you with such excellence.

I am indeed grateful to you for showering such generous hospitality on me. I am indebted in particular to Professor Khurshid Ahmad and Dr. Manazir Ahsan and all staff members of the Islamic Foundation for their kindness and brotherly treatment. May Allah grant you the strength and inspiration so that this Centre delivers more guidance and goodness. May Allah bring about such a change that this country which has popularized worldliness, materialism, Godlessness and atheism may turn into a centre for disseminating faith, morals, human values and gentleness (Ameen). I conclude my speech with two couplets from Iqbal's poetry which are quite befitting in terms of their purport about the position and role of Muslims.

You are, indeed, the trustee of the original (pledge of) honour.

You are the right and the left (hand) of the Ruler of the Universe.

Made of earth! You belong to time and space, as well!

Drink up the wine of Faith; get away from the idol-house of doubt!

Wake up, wake up, wake up from this deep slumber.
And arise!!

Seek refuge from the heart-captivating snares of the Franks.

Stay aloof from their sweetness and their aristocracy.

Europe's Genghis-like tyrants have turned the world into a barren waste.

O! builder of the Kā'bah! Rise, once more, to reconstruct this ruined world.

Wake up, wake up, wake up from this deep slumber!
And arise!!

Praise be to Allah, the Lord of the Universe.

THE RESPONSIBILITIES OF MUSLIMS IN THE WEST

Dear Brothers in Islam!

Muslims shoulder an onerous responsibility in a country where Islam is not the dominant religion, where Western values and an un-Islamic way of life hold the upper hand and in which personal and partisan interests are top of the agenda and self-gratification is the goal of life. In such cases, Muslims, particularly when they are in the minority, face a difficult situation. What is imperative is that they should have unshakeable faith, a conduct marked by boldness and strategy and absolute conviction in the message with which Allah has endowed them. They should live by a high standard and not suffer from any inferiority complex. If they do not do so, they will not hold their co-religionists in great esteem, considering them merely as imitators of Western civilization. And in this eventuality, they will not be able to play an effective and significant role which may draw others' attention and bring about any change.

Let me relate an incident which illustrates this point well. It demonstrates a devoted Muslim's conduct, a man who had full confidence in his message. For him, all the outward forms of glory and luxury had no significance whatsoever. Rather he felt pity for those given to a life of indulgence and luxury. This incident dates back to the early days of Islamic history. What prompts me to relate it to you is that this incident contains abundant lessons and is full of insight and advice.

The commander-in-chief of the Persian army, Rustum, who was next only to the Persian Emperor in his glory and power, asked the commander of the Muslim army, Sa'd bin Abi

Waqqāṣ (may Allah be pleased with him) to send to him someone who could explain to them why the Arabian nomads and bedouins had come to centres of civilization and great military power. For they bore no correspondence to Arabia.

One can well visualize what opinion Rustum had of the Arab bedouins whose lifestyle was certainly inferior to Rustum's. For the Arabs lived in tents and their staple diet was dates and camel's meat. Rustum had utter contempt for the Arabs. He, however, summoned someone who may be able to explain to him the Arab's purpose and motives in engaging in a battle with the Persians.

It is one of the miracles of Islam that it elevated all Arabs to a lofty and high standard in that they took pride in their faith, in Allah, and in Islam, and lived by the message of Islam. Sa'd bin Abī Waqqāṣ selected Rab'ī bin 'Amir (may Allah be pleased with both of them) for this purpose. Rab'ī bin 'Amir is a somewhat obscure figure in Islamic history. He did not have much to his credit. I am not relating this incident for its own sake or for its sheer interest or because it affords some gratification to our nationalistic pride. The reason why I narrate it to you is to give you some idea of Rab'ī's tremendous faith and confidence which he displayed before the commander-in-chief of the Persian Empire. This enabled him to speak freely and boldly before Rustum. This may help you compare and contrast his response with your own conduct, conviction, power of faith and your attitude towards Western culture, civilization and its hegemony. This may also serve as a vantage point for observing how we have been discharging our responsibilities and how we respond to the prevailing Western civilization which holds general currency in the contemporary world and a position of leadership and superiority.

Rab'ī bin 'Amir appeared in Rustum's court. His dress was marred with patches and darning marks. He was carrying an ordinary sword and shield. He entered the Persian camp riding an ordinary horse. Dressed in his unimpressive outfit he entered the court, crushing its plush carpets. He tied his horse and approached Rustum. As he was armed with his shield and sword, guards at the entrance objected and asked him to lay

down his weapons. Rab'ī bin 'Amir refused, saying that he had not approached Rustum on his own, rather Rustum had invited him. If the guards did not let him enter in his armed state, he would return to his camp. Rustum allowed him to retain his arms. Unaffected or overawed by the sumptuous setting of the court, Rab'ī approached with great confidence. Rustum asked him what had brought the Arabs to Persia? With his indomitable courage and conviction which owed its origin to the divine Scripture and the Prophet's message he curtly said: 'Allah has sent us so that we may liberate fellow human beings from subservience to fellow human beings and bring them to obedience to the One True God. We are here to take them from the narrowness of the world to its spaciousness. Our aim is to free them of the persecution perpetrated against them by other religions. We want to bless them with the justice and equity of Islam.'

Dear Friends and Brothers!

What Rab'ī said about Islam's message and its primary goal with full conviction and what he said about releasing men from the yoke of other religions' injustices and to bring them under Islam's justice and equity is not at all surprising. For this was his very faith. However, part of his utterance, that in which he says they had been sent to free the Persians from the narrowness of the world to its spaciousness, amazes me. Had he referred to the narrowness of this world and spaciousness of the Hereafter, it would not have perplexed me in the least. For every Muslim believes in this truism and Rab'ī belonged to the early days of Islamic history when Muslims were full of conviction. However, as I pointed out, I am amazed by his utterance that the Muslims were there to liberate fellow human beings from the narrowness of this world and to take them to its spaciousness. In other words, Rab'ī told Rustum that the Muslims had not come out of Arabia attracted by booty or any material considerations which would accrue to them. Rather, they felt pity for their fellow human beings. They intended to free them from their narrow and dark cells. For the Persians and non-Muslims appeared to them as caged animals leading only an animal-like

existence. For the Persians were slaves to their own desires and fashions of the day. They were so much bound by their own traditions and customs that they could not do anything on their own. They needed help and support at every step.

It is borne out by history that when the Persian emperor Yazdgar escaped from his palace, he felt thirsty on his way. He entered a house and was offered water in an ordinary glass. He refused to drink it in such an ordinary glass, for he was used to taking water in gold and silver vessels. If a Persian wore a crown worth less than one hundred thousand dirham or if he did not have a palace with fountains and an orchard, he did not enjoy any respect in that society.

In other words, Rab'ī pointed out to him that they were the slaves of their slaves; for they depended totally on others. The Muslims, however, wanted to liberate them and take them to a free atmosphere. The Muslims had not come to Persia for their own motives. Rather they had taken this long, arduous journey for the sake of the Persians themselves. They did not lack anything in their own homeland. For the Arabian peninsula is vast enough. However, they felt concerned about the unnatural way of life to which the Persians were addicted. The Muslims were not slaves to their own desires. Nor were they addicted to good dress and food or to a train of slaves. They led a life of absolute freedom in the desert and thanked Allah for whatever they received. Allah had sent them to liberate those whom He wills from subservience to fellow human beings and to bring them to obedience to Allah, to free them from the narrowness of this world, to bring them to its spaciousness and to enable them to benefit from Islam's justice and equity by freeing them of the oppression of other religions. For the Persians had been a target of other religions' persecution, and had led a contemptible life. They did not enjoy any real peace or happiness.

My Dear Brothers!

I need not prolong this point. You have your own responsibilities. Let me once again emphasize that you should play an independent, effective and fundamental role in society. Your

life should be an ideal one which may draw the attention of others. It should agitate the minds of the local people who may be compelled to contrast their own life with yours. Your life should make them curious for gaining sound information about Islam. However, if you slavishly imitate the Western lifestyle and degrade yourselves, there will not be and cannot be any distinction between you and the local people. In this case, they will not feel any attraction towards you. Nor will it make them reflect on you or hold you in esteem. They will not consider you a model to emulate.

However, when you present before them a unique way of life, it will make them curious. They will be forced to approach you, seeking the source of your worldview. They will naturally ask you how you learnt these high values and noble ideals. They will be keen to have literature about Islam and the biography of the Prophet Muḥammad (peace be upon him). You should, thus, explain to them what made you different and what helped you attain your noble character. This will make them respectful towards you.

My Dear Muslim Brothers!

You must present a model and an ideal way of life which may make them interested in studying Islam and eager to know the source of your guidance which enabled you to follow a particular way of life and worldview. This is the only radical way in which you can play an effective role in non-Islamic societies. However, if you assimilate yourself fully into their society and take to their way of life, as a result of either some inferiority complex or out of sheer imitation whether in the U.K., or in India or in Africa or in any part of the world, you can never influence them nor can you ever bring about any change in them, even if you live in their midst for centuries.

Finally, I must thank you for listening to me with such attention. I apologize for any lapse that I might have committed.

Praise be to Allah, the Lord of the Universe.

References

1. Al-Bukhārī, *al-Jāmi' al-Ṣaḥīḥ*, 'Kitāb al-Jihād'.
2. With all modesty I refer to two of my writings containing a wealth of material on this subject: (i) *Islam and the World* and (ii) *Mohammad Rasulullah*.